



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE
WASHINGTON

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March 23, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE RICHARD HELMS
Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

I am grateful to you for sending me the February 6 paper on "Communist Reactions to Certain US Courses of Action". The findings on Paragraph 23 dealing with Soviet reactions to de-escalation were very much along the line of my own thinking.

The sections of the paper dealing with Soviet reaction to certain escalatory actions on our part seem to me to be somewhat understated. I recognize, of course, that the paper was done before the full results of the Kosygin-Wilson talks were available and also before Kosygin's two recent speeches which were mild in tone, but nonetheless sober, about their reaction to U.S. escalation.

It is clear that in London, Kosygin went quite far in indicating Soviet willingness to use their influence to bring Hanoi to a conference. I doubt that they have as yet sufficient leverage to get Hanoi to negotiate unless Hanoi itself is ready to do so.

Our bombing of North Vietnam has of course been a source of embarrassment, frustration, and humiliation to the Soviet Union and an escalation of our bombing will cause the Russians to become increasingly involved in the Vietnam war. I would agree with the points that are outlined on pages 12 and 13 of your paper but I think I would

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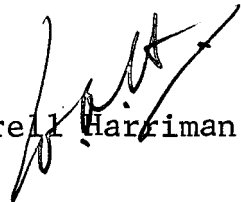
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go somewhat further. If we interdict Soviet shipping, I think a confrontation between the Soviet Union and ourselves in Southeast Asia will become increasingly more likely. I cannot predict exactly what the Soviets would do, but I feel sure that they would find ways to make life more difficult for us not only in Vietnam but perhaps elsewhere.

I have asked Chet Cooper to get in touch with you and Sherman Kent in the course of the next few days to expand on some of the thoughts that I have expressed here.

W. Averell Harriman



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